

FINAL DECISION DOCUMENTATION and DECISION RATIONALE

Projects 3, 4 and 5 (Conifer Release)
EA # OR080-03-5
Watershed Restoration and Road Decommissioning

USDI - Bureau of Land Management
Salem District Office, Marys Peak Resource Area

Sections 15, 16, 22, 23, 25, 26, 35, 36; Township 15 South, Range 8 West, Willamette Meridian
Lane County

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Marys Peak Resource Area, completed an environmental analysis for the three conifer release projects (Projects 3, 4, and 5) in the Watershed Restoration and Road Decommissioning Environmental Assessment # OR080-03-5 (EA) (see Table 1, below). The proposed projects, and the affected environment and potential environmental consequences of the proposed projects, are described in the aforementioned EA. The EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were made available for public review from April 24 to May 28, 2003.

Table 1: Description of Projects and Location

	Project 3	Project 4	Project 5
Project Description	Planted conifers in an ongoing riparian project would be released by thinning and removing alders (approximately 34 acres along 1.2 miles of stream).	Scattered conifers in the proposed project areas (approximately 70 acres along 6 miles of stream) would be released from competition by alders. The alders would be removed from the site.	Two patch openings (4 acres and 1 acre) would be created in alder dominated stands and conifers planted.
Project Location	T15S, R8W, sec. 16, 23, 26	T15S, R8W, sec. 16, 22, 23, 25, 26, 35, 36	T15S, R8W, sec. 26 (4 acres), sec. 35 (1 acre)

The proposal complies with relevant laws, regulations and management plans for managing BLM administered lands, including the following:

- *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (S&M ROD, January 2001)*
- *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement For Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (S&M FSEIS, November 2000), and 2001, 2002 Annual Species Review, BLM Information Bulletin No. OR-2002-033.*
- *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP, May 1995)*
- *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (ROD, April 1994)*

- *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (SEIS, February 1994)*
- *Salem District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS, September 1994)*
- *Western Oregon Program-Management of Competing Vegetation Final Environmental Impact Statement (VMFEIS, February 1989) and the Western Oregon Program-Management of Competing Vegetation Record of Decision (August 1992).*

The EA is tiered to the aforementioned environmental documents. All of these documents may be reviewed at the Salem District BLM office, Marys Peak Resource Area, 1717 Fabry Rd. S., Salem Oregon.

Decision Record

After reviewing public comment, the content of the EA and supporting project record, the management recommendations contained in the *Lobster/Five Rivers Watershed Analysis* (USDA Forest Service, 1997) and the management direction contained in the *RMP*, I have decided to implement Alternative 1 (proposed action), and the associated design features, as described in the EA. This alternative will be referred to from this point as the selected action.

Decision

Project 3: Alders would be thinned to a 30 foot spacing, cutting and removing approximately 20 alders per acre on approximately 34 acres and 1.2 miles of stream.

Project 4: Scattered Douglas-fir, western red cedar and western hemlock along streams in the project areas would be released by cutting and removing approximately 30 alders per acre. The proposed project is approximately 70 acres, along approximately 6 miles of stream.

Project 5: Approximately 90 alders per acre in two patches (4 acres and 1 acre) would be cut and removed. All brush would be cut in order to create openings in which western red cedar and western hemlock would be planted.

Decision Rationale

My rationale for this decision follows:

1. The selected action addresses the identified purpose and need for action in that it will meet the need for improved fish habitat over the long term by providing long term high quality large wood recruitment for streams as described in the *RMP* on page 28; and the need for large conifers in Riparian Reserves as described in the *RMP* on page 7.

2. Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 were not selected for the following reasons:

Alternative 2 - Alternative 2 proposed to leave the cut alders on site. The ID Team determined that additional hardwood CWD was not needed in the project areas and that removing the cut alders would cause no measurable increased risk to water quality or soil productivity. Removing the alders and selling them would, however, increase the likelihood of completion of the proposed projects since the probability of receiving appropriated funds to implement them using a service contract is low.

Alternative 3 - Alternative 3 is identical to Alternative 1 for Projects 3, 4, and 5.

Alternative 4 - The “no action” alternative was not selected because it would not meet *RMP* objectives for Riparian Reserves; nor would it meet species composition and structural diversity objectives in the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives (*RMP*, p. 5-6).

Public Involvement/Coordination/Consultation

Scoping

Efforts to involve the public in planning for the proposed action were as follows:

- The general area was shown as Riparian Reserves in the *ROD* and *RMP*. These documents were widely circulated in the state of Oregon and elsewhere, and public review and comment were requested at each step of the planning process.
- A legal notice announcing availability of the EA for public review and comment was submitted to the *Corvallis Gazette-Times* and published on May 1, 2003. The FONSI/EA was open for comment from April 24 through May 28, 2003.
- The EA and FONSI have been available for review on the internet at Salem BLM’s website, <http://www.or.blm/salem> (under Planning) since April 29, 2003.

Comments

One e-mail was received from Oregon Natural Resources Council. Appendix A summarizes the substantive comments and questions and includes BLM's response.

Consultation

Due to the close proximity of unsurveyed suitable habitat (less than 0.25 mile), these projects are considered a **may affect, not likely to adversely affect** if implemented during the period August 6 to September 30 and a **no effect** between October 1 and February 28. Formal consultation with the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service has addressed potential impacts to federally listed wildlife species. A Biological Opinion (BO) which was received on April 4, 2002 (reference # 1-7-02-F-422) concluded that these types of projects would not likely result in jeopardy to any listed species. All applicable terms and conditions required by the BO have been incorporated into the project design features for this proposed action. No significant effects are anticipated to occur to any other Special Status Species or Special Attention Species (including Survey and Manage Species).

The project area is in the Five Rivers/Lobster Creek drainage. This watershed has anadromous fish adjacent to the project areas. The Biological Assessment (BA), which assessed potential impacts to listed fish in the Oregon Coast Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU) was submitted to NOAA Fisheries May 15, 2003. A Letter of Concurrence dated June 13, 2003 concluded that the proposed project is **not likely to adversely affect** listed Oregon Coast coho salmon.

Conclusion

As Field Manager of the Marys Peak Resource Area, I reviewed the record for this proposed project and have decided to implement Alternative 1, the proposed action as described in the EA. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on April 23, 2003 and was issued with this EA. I have determined that changes to this Finding of No Significant Impact are not necessary for these reasons:

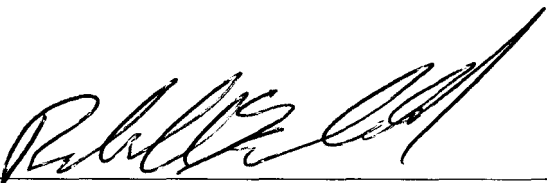
The existing EA for this project, along with additional information contained in this document, fully covers the project and there are no new circumstances or facts relevant to environmental concerns of the proposed action or its impacts, which were not addressed in the EA.

Protests

In accordance with forest management regulations at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for these projects will not become effective or be open to formal protest until the notice of decision is published "in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located." Protests of the project must be filed within 15 days of the first publication of the notice. For this project, the notice of decision will be published in the *Corvallis Gazette-Times* on or before July 25, 2003. The planned negotiated sale date is August 15, 2003, or after.

Protests must be addressed to the Marys Peak Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 1717 Fabry Road SE, Salem, Oregon, 97306. Upon receiving a timely protest, I will reconsider my decision in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information. I will prepare a written response to the protest(s) and send my response(s) to the protesting party or parties (43 CFR 5003.3). My response(s) to the protest(s) may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

Contact Person: For additional information concerning this decision or the BLM protest and appeal process, contact Amy Haynes, (503) 315-5955, Marys Peak Field Office, 1717 Fabry Road SE, Salem, Oregon 97306; or Amy_Haynes@BLM.gov.



Cindy Enstrom
Marys Peak Resource Area Field Manager

07/16/03

Date

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND BLM RESPONSES

We prefer the alternative that does not remove the alders. Leaving the alders will avoid the need for heavy road use, yarding disturbance, landings, etc. (Oregon Natural Resources Council)

BLM Response:

The interdisciplinary team concluded that there would be no measurable increased risks to water quality or soil productivity from yarding. All equipment would remain on the road and the landings are expected to extend only a few feet beyond the ditch line. In Project 4, the largest proposed project, only scattered conifers are proposed for release, and therefore few trees would be yarded from any one area. Only 20 alders per acre are proposed for removal in Project 3. As stated in the EA (page 30), past projects involving yarding of alders to roads by winching has resulted in no negative effects to the soils. Effects from this project should be no different. The heavy brush and slash would protect the soil surface during yarding of the moderate to small size logs, therefore no significant damage would occur to the soil surface. The EA also states, on page 39, that it is unlikely that the proposed projects would lead to measurable increases in sediment delivery to streams or stream turbidity because of the small number of trees being yarded and the stream buffers which would act to filter any potential sediment from yarding activities. Expected log hauling rate would be 1 to 3 truck loads per day. Very little sediment production from road traffic is expected (EA, p. 31).

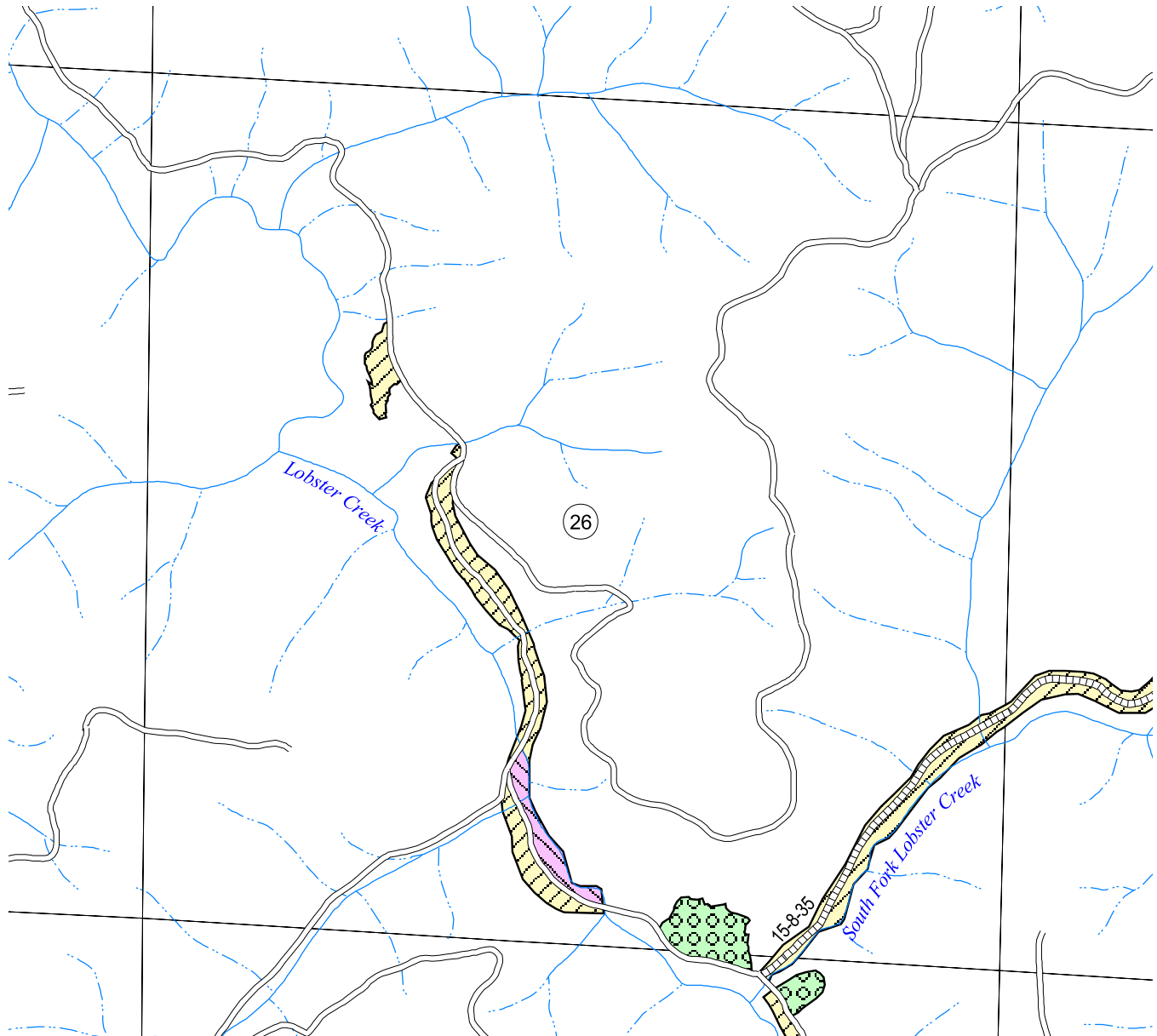
In the patch cut areas, alders would have to be removed in order to clear planting spots for underplanting large seedlings.

Operationally, removing the alders and selling them would increase the likelihood of completion of the proposed projects, since the probability of receiving appropriated funds to implement them using a service contract is low.

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MARYS PEAK WATERSHED RESTORATION
AND ROAD DECOMMISSIONING EA MAP

T. 15S., R. 8W., Section 26, W. M. - SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON



LEGEND

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Existing Road | Non-Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 5 - patch cuts |
| Project 1 - road to be decommissioned | Project 3 - alder thinning | EA Unit Boundaries |
| Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 4 - scattered conifer release | |

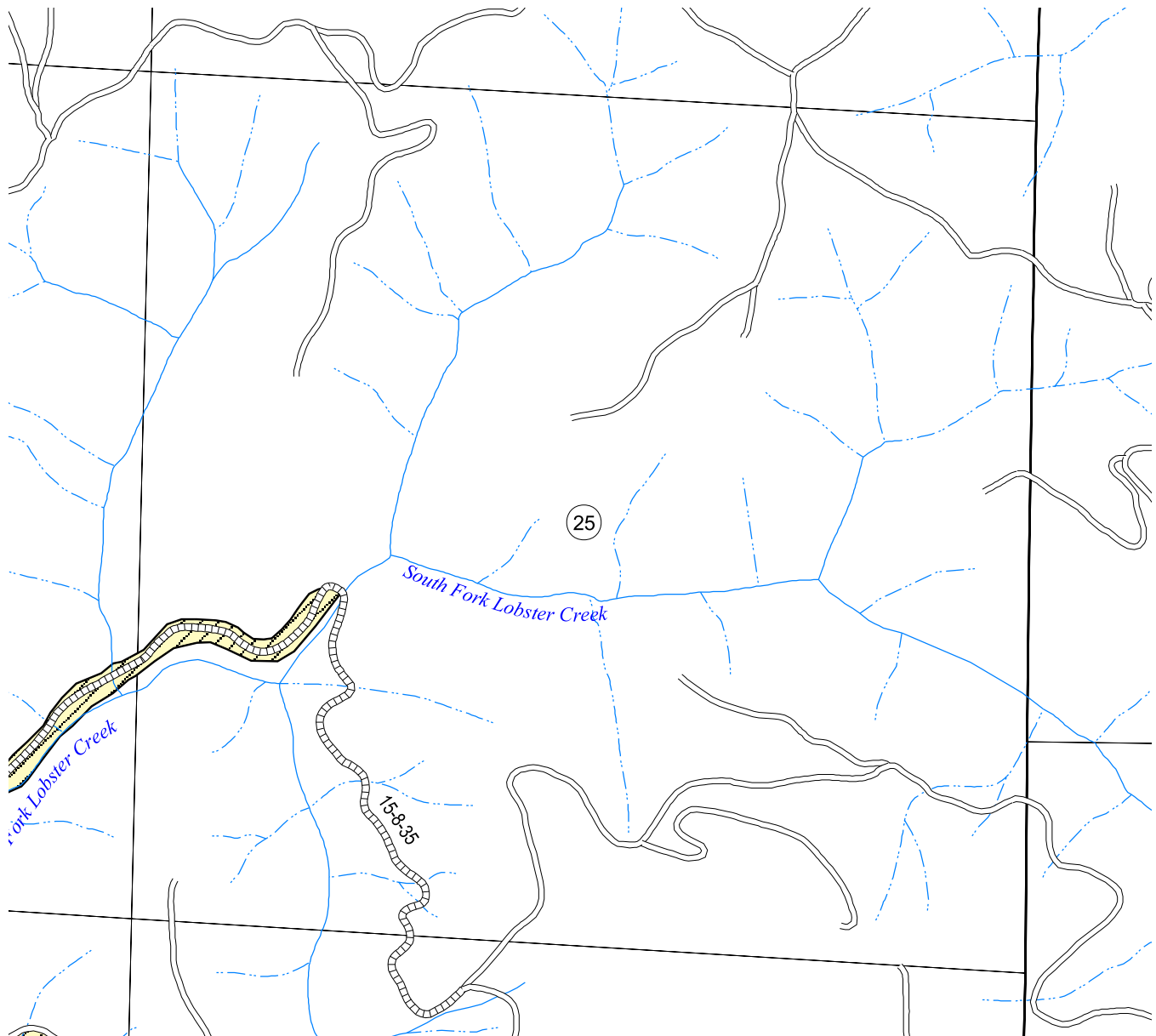


Scale: 1" = 1,000'

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MARYS PEAK WATERSHED RESTORATION
AND ROAD DECOMMISSIONING EA MAP

T. 15S., R.8W., Section 25, W. M. - SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON



LEGEND

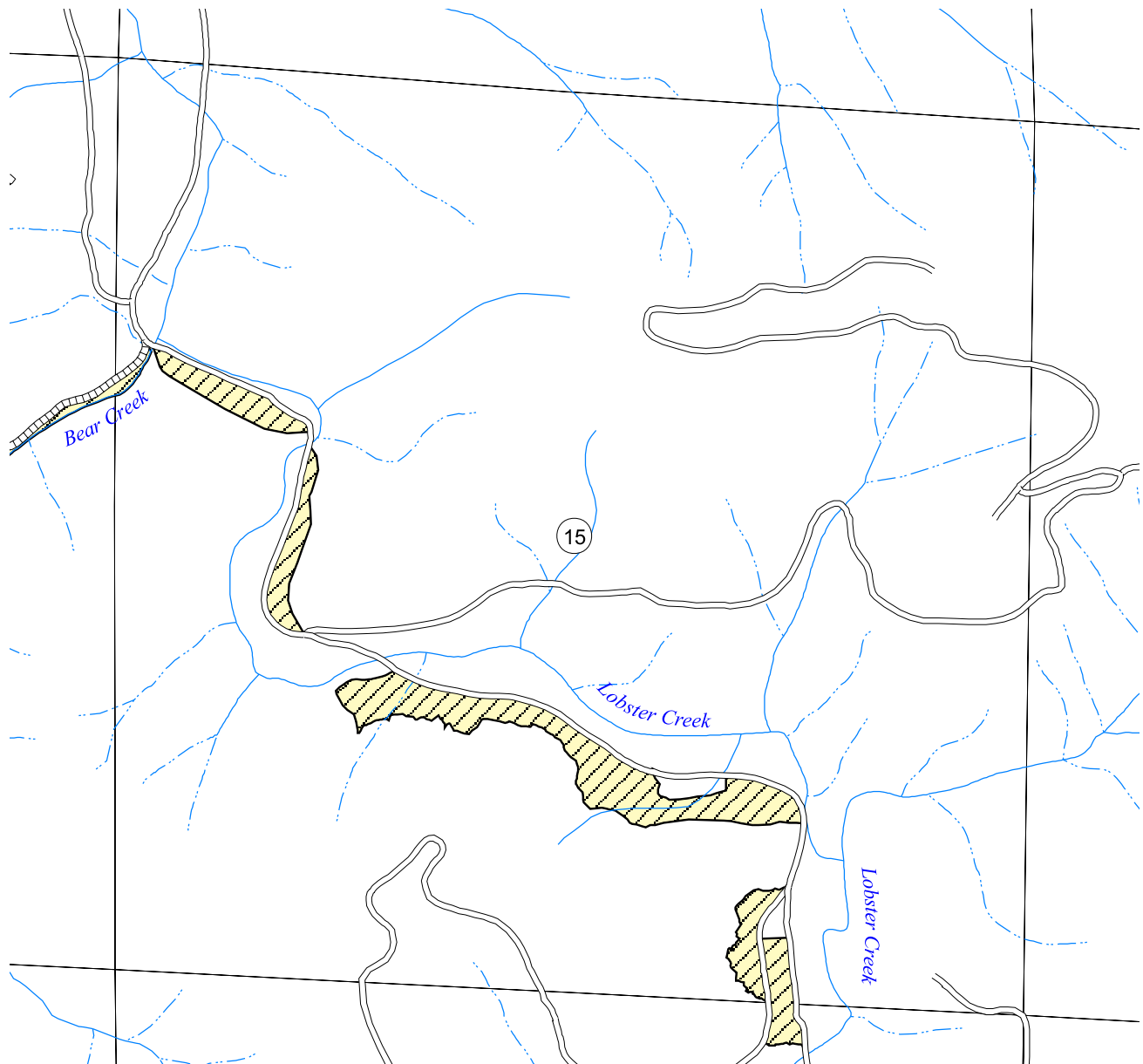
- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Existing Road | Non-Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 5 - patch cuts |
| Project 1 - road to be decommissioned | Project 3 - alder thinning | EA Unit Boundaries |
| Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 4 - scattered conifer release | |



Scale: 1" = 1,000'

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
**MARYS PEAK WATERSHED RESTORATION
AND ROAD DECOMMISSIONING EA MAP**

T.15S.,R.8W., Section 15, W. M. - SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON



LEGEND

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Existing Road | Non-Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 5 - patch cuts |
| Project 1 - road to be decommissioned | Project 3 - alder thinning | EA Unit Boundaries |
| Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 4 - scattered conifer release | |

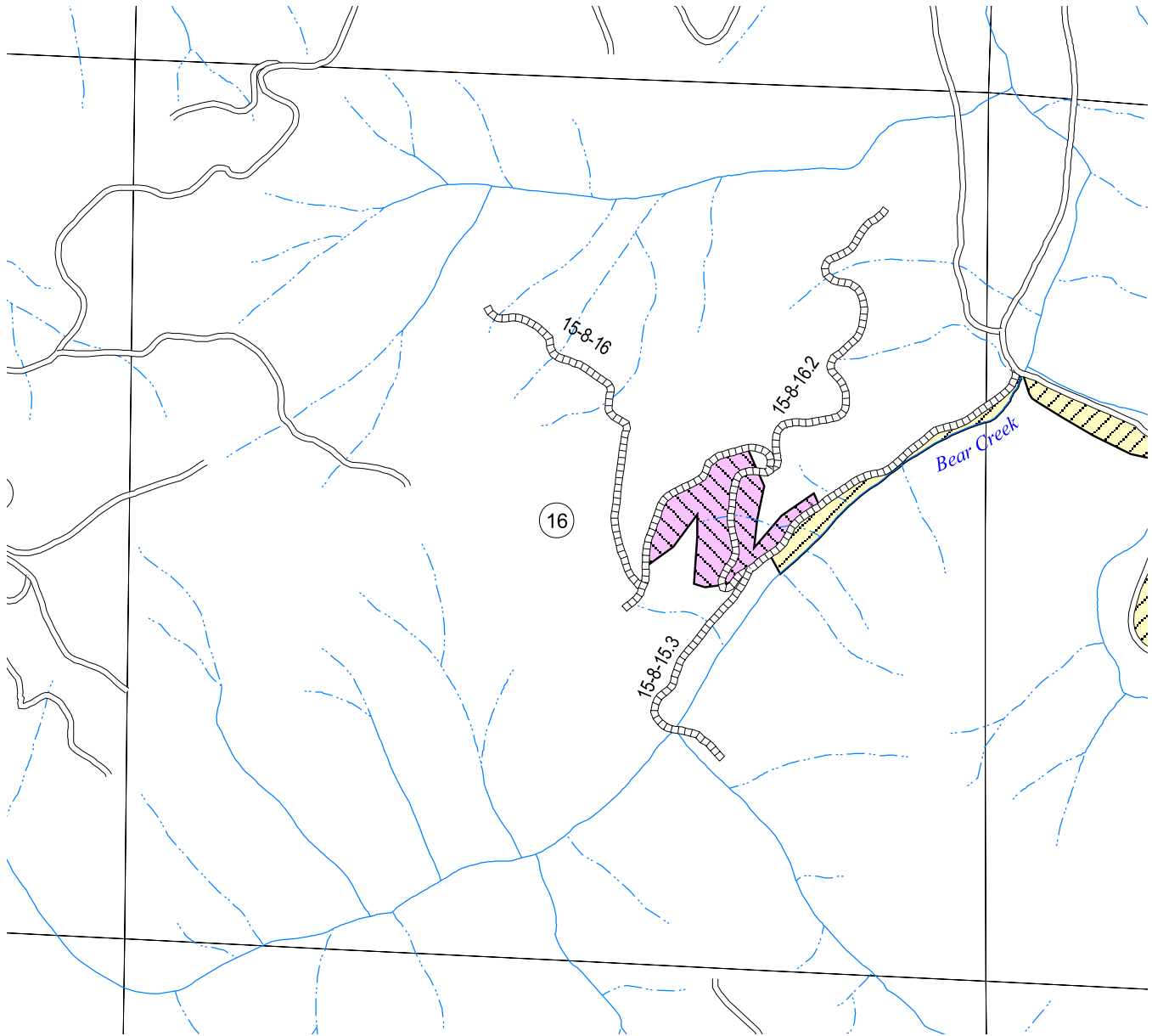


Scale: 1" = 1,000'

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MARYS PEAK WATERSHED RESTORATION
AND ROAD DECOMMISSIONING EA MAP

T15S, R8W, Section 16, W. M. - SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON



LEGEND

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Existing Road | Non-Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 5 - patch cuts |
| Project 1- road to be decommissioned | Project 3 - alder thinning | EA Unit Boundaries |
| Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 4 - scattered conifer release | |

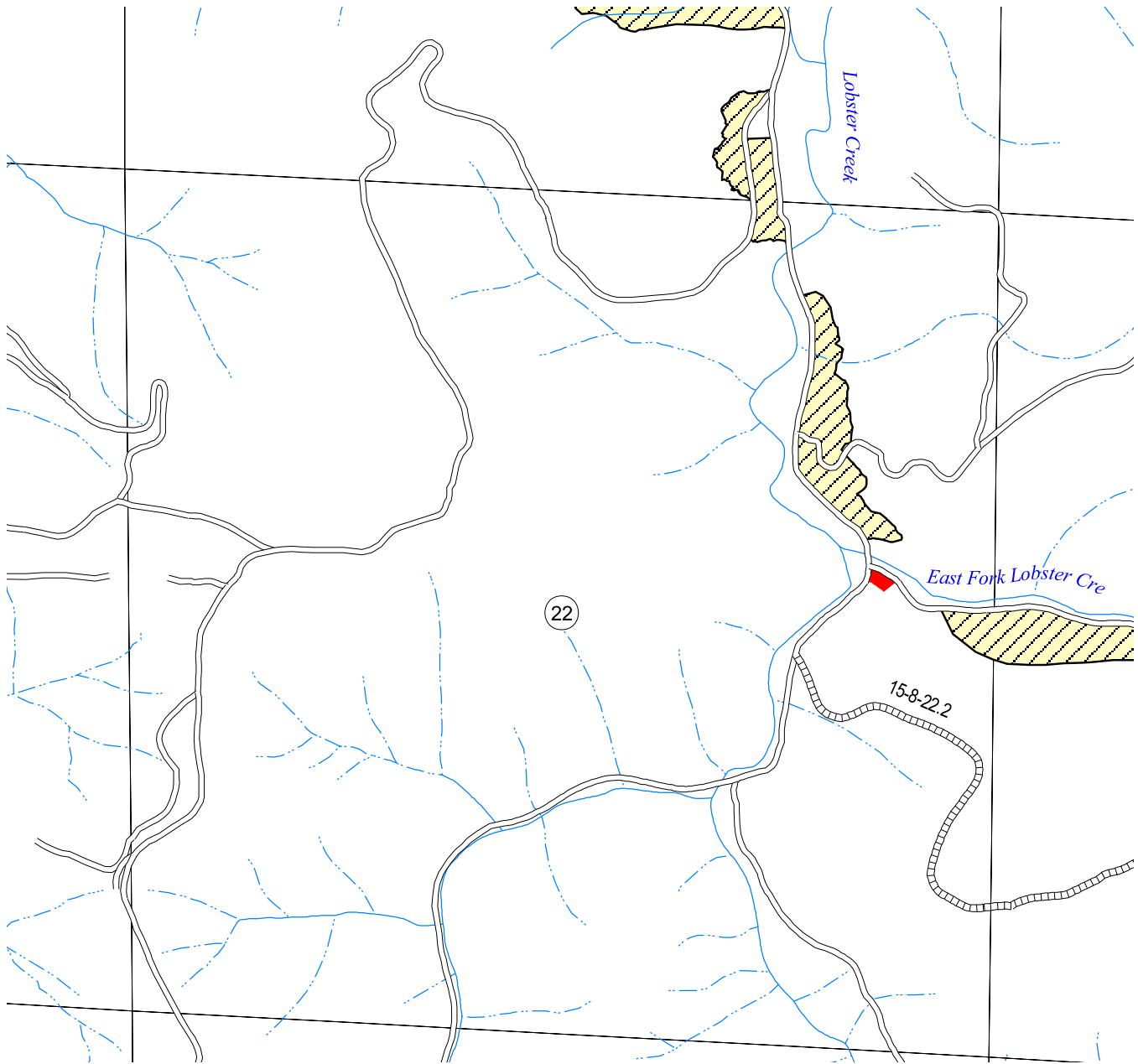


Scale: 1" = 1,000'

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MARYS PEAK WATERSHED RESTORATION
AND ROAD DECOMMISSIONING EA MAP

T.15S.,R.8W., Section 22, W. M. - SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON



LEGEND

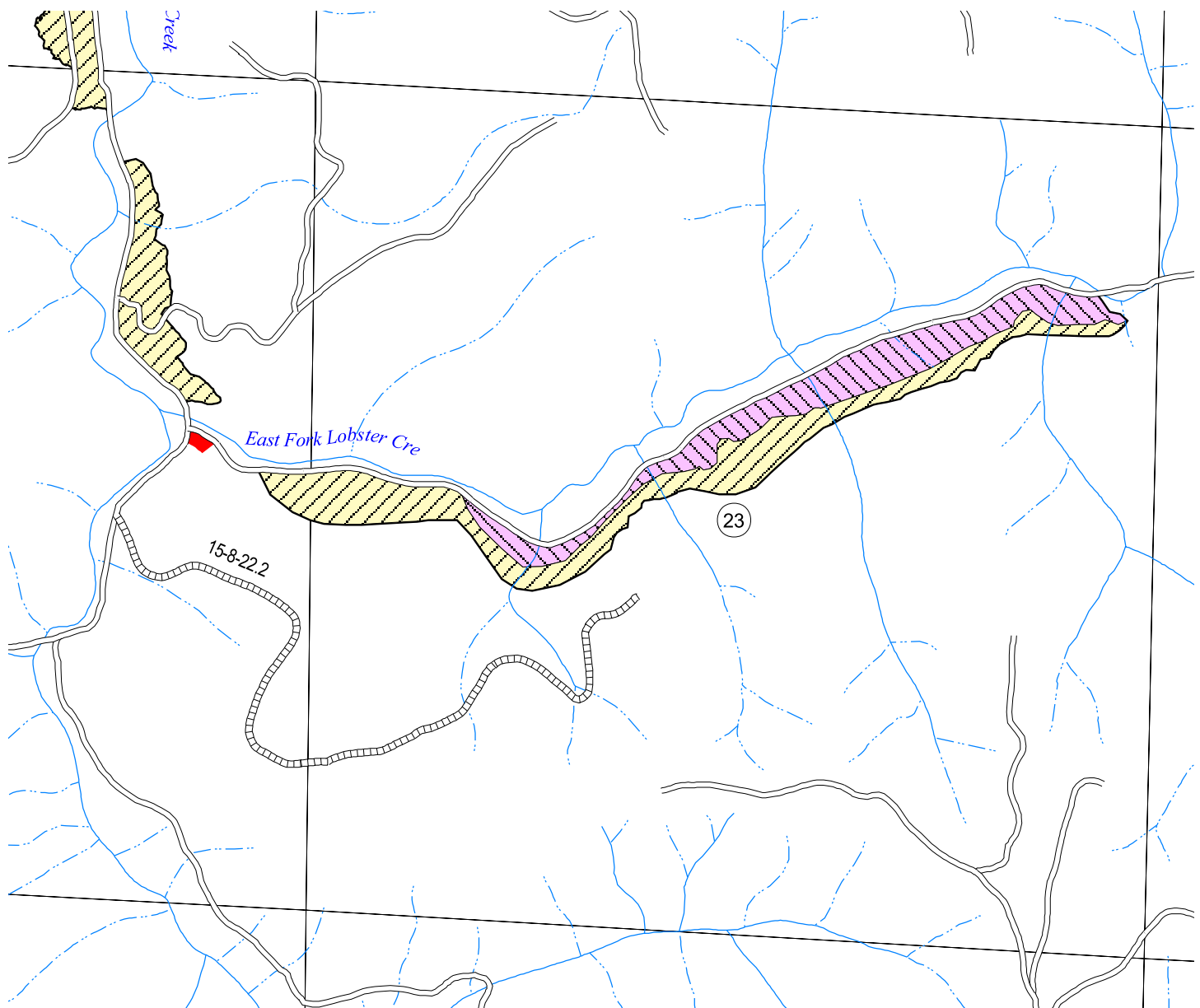
- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Existing Road | Non-Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 5 - patch cuts |
| Project 1 - Road to be decommissioned | Project 3 - alder thinning | EA Unit Boundaries |
| Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 4 - scattered conifer release | mollusk protection area |



Scale: 1" = 1,000'

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
**MARYS PEAK WATERSHED RESTORATION
AND ROAD DECOMMISSIONING EA MAP**

T.15S.,R.8W., Section 23, W. M. - SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON



LEGEND

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Existing Road | Non-Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 5 - patch cuts |
| Project 1 - Road to be Decommissioned | Project 3 - alder thinning | EA Unit Boundaries |
| Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 4 - scattered conifer release | mollusk protection area |

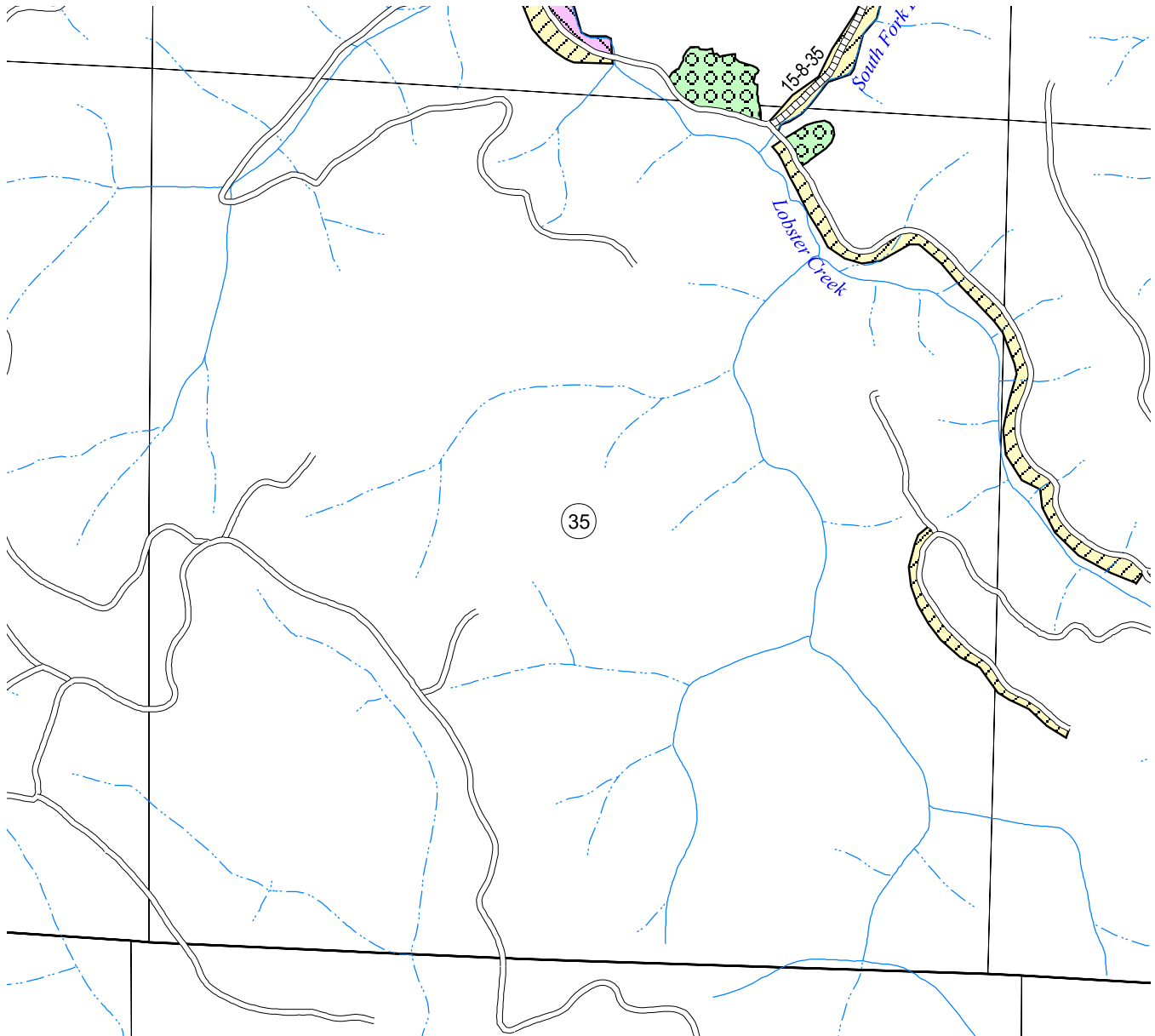


Scale: 1" = 1,000'

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MARYS PEAK WATERSHED RESTORATION
AND ROAD DECOMMISSIONING EA MAP

T.15S.,R.8W., Section 35, W. M. - SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON



LEGEND

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Existing Road | Non-Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 5 - patch cuts |
| Project 1 - road to be decommissioned | Project 3 - alder thinning | EA Unit Boundaries |
| Fishbearing, Not Verified | Project 4 - scattered conifer release | |



Scale: 1" = 1,000'